

narrow black median band is generally limited to the nuchal region, rarely extending to the end of the trunk.

Cape Colony. Several specimens from Sir A. Smith's collection. The body of the largest is 63 millims. long.

XL.—Note on *Trionyx gangeticus*, Cuvier, and *Trionyx hurum*, B. Hamilton. By JOHN ANDERSON, M.D., Calcutta.

HAVING examined forty-five living specimens of a *Trionyx* the young and adolescent individuals of which agree in their form and coloration with the figure given in Hardwicke and Gray's 'Illustrations of Indian Zoology' as *Trionyx javanicus*, Schw., and having removed the skulls and compared them with Cuvier's figure of *T. gangeticus*, I do not hesitate to refer them to one and the same species, i. e. *T. gangeticus*, Cuvier; the adult skulls in form and size agree with the skull figured by Dr. Gray as *T. gangeticus*, Cuvier; whereas, on the other hand, the *Trionyx hurum* and *T. ocellatus* of Dr. Gray (that is, specimens corresponding exactly with these drawings, which Dr. Gray afterwards referred to the *T. gangeticus* of Cuvier) yield skulls quite distinct from Cuvier's figure of the skull which he regarded as the *Trionyx du Gange*! The true *Trionyx gangeticus*, Cuv., is therefore the species which has hitherto gone under the name of *T. javanicus*, Schw., if by the latter were meant *Trionyches* agreeing with the figure so named in the 'Illustrations of Indian Zoology.' The skulls, however, of such forms, as they answer in every detail to Cuvier's figure, could not well be referred to any other species; so we have here another instance of a Chelonian animal as a whole having a specific geographical name allocated to it, while its dismembered skull has awarded to it another but kindred term. The cause of this unfortunate jumble of names as applied to the *Trionyx* of the Ganges, and each of which implies a distinct theory as to its distribution, is not difficult to explain, so long as animals are described, as in this case, from drawings, without any practical knowledge of the structural characters of the animal itself.

One hundred and twenty examples, living specimens, shells, and sterna, of the common *Trionyx* of the Ganges have passed through my hands; but in collecting them I succeeded in obtaining only two individuals agreeing with Dr. Gray's figures of *T. hurum* and *T. ocellatus*. The abundance, therefore, of the former indicates the propriety that, in one sense, exists in the name given to it by Cuvier. Specimens agreeing with the last-mentioned figures yield skulls in no way resembling the skull figured by Cuvier as *T. gangeticus*. The head-

coloration of the specimens yielding skulls identical with the skull figured by Cuvier is very characteristic and uniform, except in very old individuals. The upper surface of the head is uniformly greenish olive, and there is a black line running from between the eyes to the nape, with three pairs of divergent stripes on either side of it directed downwards and backwards. There is no yellowish temporal spot, nor any band across the nose. Young individuals with these characters have greenish-olive shells vermiculated with fine black lines; and of the large series of specimens that have come under my observation, not one has presented any trace of ocelli. The only change that occurs in the coloration of the adult is that the lines on the head become more or less broken up, and the vermiculations on the shell all but disappear. On the other hand, about twenty specimens of *Trionyx* with the yellow spot on the temporal region, and another at the angle of the mouth, with a yellow band across the snout, and with the surface of the head marbled with reticulated black lines over a ground-colour varying in the intensity of its yellow hue, and with the upper shell marked usually with four ocelli, which disappear with age, but of which generally faint traces can be detected in the form of dark spots, have, as I have already stated, skulls quite distinct from Cuvier's *T. gangeticus*. I propose therefore to retain provisionally for this last-mentioned form Dr. Buchanan Hamilton's name of *T. hurum*, and for the former *T. gangeticus*, Cuvier.

Dr. Günther*, in writing of the *T. javanicus*, Schweigger, as identified by Gray, observes, "that the characteristic markings of the head of the continental specimens are not mentioned in descriptions of Javan individuals, so that both may be specifically different." Now, however, that *T. javanicus* of Gray seems unquestionably to be *T. gangeticus* of Cuvier, may it not be that the "*T. gangeticus*, Cuvier" of Gray may prove to be *T. javanicus*, Schweigger. I have never seen *T. javanicus* in the flesh, nor am I acquainted with its skull; so that I only throw this out as a suggestion.

The skull of *T. gangeticus*, Cuv., as I have now indicated the species, differs from the form I provisionally designate *T. hurum* in its broader and shorter snout—two characters which also distinguish the heads in life. But I shall elsewhere illustrate and describe the two skulls in detail, the sterna, and sexual characters.

The foregoing identification is an important one, as it opens the way to a more satisfactory understanding of a group by clearing away a load of synonyms.

* Reptiles of British India, p. 48.